

Volume 1, Issue 4

4 February 2006



4TH SUPPORT BATTALION, 1ST BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM

HAMBONE EXPRESS

Battalion Commander's Corner

One Team, One Fight!

Soldiers of the Packhorse Battalion – It is that time again for the "Hambone Express". I want to begin by saying how proud I am of each and every soldier in the formation. We have quickly and professionally assumed our mission and are getting the job done every day. You have a lot to be proud because you are doing a lot. Every mechanic, medic, supply specialist, fuel handler, truck driver, guard and security provider blend together to create the great Packhorse Team! Together we are making a difference and our efforts ensure the Raider Brigade accomplishes its mission. Keep up the great work!

To our family and friends, I again send my thanks and appreciation for all you do in support of your service member. By the volume of mail, I would say that there are many lucky soldiers in the formation with folks who care about them. We are many

miles away, but know we think of you often and look forward to being with you again soon. We will begin Environmental and Morale Leave soon. Many of you will see your soldier in the coming months. Enjoy your time together and get them back on the plane on time!

-Packhorse 6



Command Sergeant Major's Corner

This is Packhorse 7 signing in;

The days are flying by now and every soldier in the formation is gainfully employed. I've been talking to Soldiers and NCOs across the formation and spirits are high. I also believe morale is good, under the circumstances. I'm proud of the professionalism and positive attitude that all our soldiers have been displaying thus far. We've had numerous promotions this month; they were all well deserved. We have been conducting numerous missions that are not the norm for a Support Battalion, and all of Soldiers have stepped up and accomplished everything asked of them. Continue to send mail, the biggest smiles I see on the Soldiers is when they are picking up their packages. I want to personally thank all the fami-

lies back home for all the support they are providing; it makes our job that much easier knowing that we have the support of our loved ones back home. Until next time.



Packhorse 7 OUT!



SPEAK OUT!

AS REPORTED BY SGT GISELYANN GUDIEL



How do you think this deployment will change you?



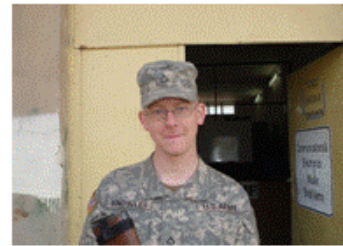
"It will help me be a better person and change my attitude." -PFC Barnes (ACO)



"I'll be able to buy a whole bunch of stuff when I get back!" -SSG Sessom (HHC)



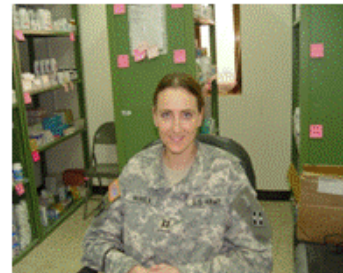
"It will help me appreciate family life more." -SPC Johnston (BCO)



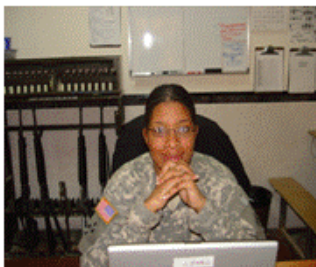
"It will help me learn more about my MOS. More hands-on with different equipment you don't normally get to work with." -PFC Knowles (BCO)



"It made me realize that there are people living in worse conditions than we are." -SPC Smith (HHC)



"It will help me be more aware of the things and opportunities that are available to us back home." -CPT Minica (CCO)



"It will open or create windows of opportunities." -SPC Ivory (CCO)



"After this year long deployment, I think I will learn to be more flexible, argue less with my sister and appreciate the smaller things in life. I also think I will have eaten every type of cheesecake at least once!" -1LT Cioffi (ACO)

Family Readiness Group



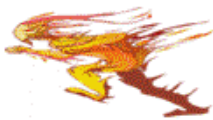
Greetings again from Taji, Iraq. We have been here for over a month now. All missions and tasking are being met to support the 1st Raider Brigade Combat Team. We have continued to fill critical supply and maintenance shortages to meet the brigade's needs. For all that do not know, by the 9th of February, the Packhorse Battalion will have been deployed for over 60 days. This means our Soldiers are eligible to take Rest and Recuperation (R&R) Leave, which is a part of the Environmental Morale Leave Program (EML). This allows Soldiers to take 15 days of leave to any location or final destination of their choice.

Our Soldiers continue to adjust to the way life on Taji. Soldiers are taking the opportunity to shop in the Bazaar and entertainment stores. Also they have taken time to break the redundancy of eating at the chow hall by buying food at the food court. The food court has Burger King, Subway, Popeye's Chicken, and Taco Bell. Don't worry, our Soldiers have been doing Physical Training (PT) and have five gyms for their use.

We the Packhorse Battalion have done well and our days till we get home are becoming shorter. Please keep in mind that we are not able to do this job without your support! Thank You for everything! Packhorse 1 signing out!

-CPT EDDIE CASIANO
Battalion Adjutant





As a new lieutenant straight out of the Military Intelligence Officer Basic Course I was a bit apprehensive about my first assignment and my first deployment. I'd heard plenty of stories of 2nd Lieutenants being told to go in search of a box of grid squares, or chem light batteries. I arrived at Fort Hood on December 1st, in-processed into 4SB as the new S2 around December 7th, and shortly thereafter, on December 15th, I was on a plane headed to Kuwait.

Although I was not sent in search of a box of grid squares, I did feel a bit out of sorts in the new environment and new position. The S3, CPT Post, quickly became a mentor to me and started me off in the right direction. It was not until the unit arrived in Iraq that I really began to get a feel for the rest of the S2/S3 section.

The others in the section, CPT Guzman, SFC Golden, SSG Markey, SSG Sickles, SSG Donovan, SPC Lee, SPC Walden, and CPL Shamel, are all very hard-working, motivated men. When they are not busy working the most common topics of conversation are working out and the latest sports events. They are also always ready to spend a moment sharing pictures and stories about their families back home.

The S2/S3 section stands out in its own bright way with three of the people having completely shaved heads, and SSG Donovan and SSG Sickles threatening to shave CPT Post's in his sleep in order to further section unity. Trying to catch CPT Post sleeping is not very hard. He works such long hours, often late into the night, and the next day we'll often catch him falling asleep mid-sentence at the computer.

I've learned a lot from the other officers, NCOs, and Soldiers, during my short time with the section. I am constantly impressed by the work ethic and professionalism with which everyone does their job. There are good days, and not so good days, but we manage to get through each of them just the same. On a good day we'll often hear CPT Post break out into song, and then we quickly remind him why he's in the Army and not on American Idol.



— 2LT Katherine Fenton



This is our first month in Iraq since the unit left Kuwait. Since we arrived at Camp Taji, the Soldiers have been training and cross-training within the company on different equipment. Another focus has been to become more comfortable with the equipment we have in the motorpool. It is satisfying to see some of the Soldiers and NCOs eager to teach and lead from the front.

As part of the POL and Water Platoon, I have been working with: TPUs (Truck Pump Unit), M871 trailers, and M931 bobtails to become more familiar and more proficient doing daily operations. A lot of tasks we do daily include PMCS, sampling and gauging, driver's training, and delivering fuel around the camp. Soldiers are usually eager to drive and go on missions and it helps maintain a sense of urgency on day-to-day missions. The rest of the Soldiers are enrolling in Army Correspondence Courses to learn the basic concepts of Petroleum and Water to continue learning when not doing hands-on training.

We also have different MOSs to include 92F (Fuel), 92L (Lab Technician) and 92W (Water) in our platoon. The NCOs have tasked our specialists to help us train our 92Ws, with a primary MOS in water purification and 92L with a primary MOS as a lab technician. This has encouraged our 92Fs to see who can train the NCOs the fastest since the majority of our NCOs are 92Ws. The specialists who have been here in Iraq and know their MOS are now the instructors. This helps our NCOs know the 92F field and the Soldiers learn how to be leaders. It also shows that our NCOs are Soldiers too and sometimes don't know everything. It has been a great morale booster for our platoon and we look forward to more training experiences.

SGT Anthony Palmer

POL/WTR Platoon

A Company, 4th SB



SPC Bjunes and 1LT Rutty make sure 1LT Rutty's gas mask is working perfectly.



SPC Gates helps keep the company's vehicles both clean and in great working order.



Without maintenance there is no combat power. The mechanics, technicians, and maintainers of Bravo Company, 4th SB are the might behind the fight and the force gives power to those who move mountains. Everyday, since we've been deployed, Bravo Company soldiers have performed exceptionally well. For many, this is their first experience outside The United States. For others, it is their second or third deployment to South West Asia. This deployment possesses new challenges that I know Bravo Company can overcome. We have trained long and hard for this and I am absolutely confident that we are ready for this mission.

Robust enthusiasm, are the words I use to describe how well we work together as a team. Bravo Company Soldiers push through their daily work load fixing 1st Brigade Combat Team's equipment. Soldiers, NCOs, and officers in this company understand that they are directly involved in the mission accomplishment of our brothers and sisters in combat arms and combat support units. These incredible "Hidden Heroes" make it possible for others to do their job. In particular, I have never seen a more involved and technically sound group of warrant officers. They are truly a special group of technical expert who bring so much to the table and we are all glad to have them on our team. Maintenance units don't normally receive much recognition in new headlines, but we have the satisfaction of knowing that what we do helps so many.



Through thick and thin, we stand together in this Global War on Terror. Ever mindful that the contributions of Soldiers working side by side, collectively moving as one force, will ultimately bring us to victory.

Congratulations to SFC Robinson, SPC Angeny, SPC Sandoval, SPC Phillips, SPC Lewter, SPC Olmos, and PV2 Harn on their recent promotions.

Special thanks to all of our friends and family who have supported us from day one. You are always in our thoughts and we appreciate all the care packages and well wishes.

"MADDAWGS, MAINTENANCE TOUGH!"

- Captain Hayden L. Joseph



CW2 Williams and PV2 Patterson in the Armament Section.



SFC Robinson's (right) reenlistment.

* (In the text: SPC Jennings is pictured in the welding shop.)

PROMOTIONS ABOUND IN COBRA MED...

The first of February was full of promotions and ceremonies. SGT Ruiz was promoted to Staff Sergeant (SSG), seven soldiers are now brand new specialists and one step closer to joining the NCO ranks, SPC Adame, SPC Boesch, SPC Davis, SPC Horn, SPC Mullins, SPC Odam, and SPC Trahan, and three others will enjoy a pay raise and increased responsibilities as well, newly pinned PFC Murrell, PFC Perkins, and PV2 Spence. Several other soldiers were recognized for earning the Good Conduct Medal: SSG Ruiz (3rd time awarded), SGT Haynes (6th), SGT Stevens (6th), and the following first time awardees: SGT Boggs, SGT Martinez, SGT Taylor, SPC Free-land, SPC Ivory, and SPC Walker. The company always enjoys these ceremonies, recognizing and rewarding the soldiers as we continue on with the missions at hand.



The commander congratulates SGT Taylor on her award.



SPC Boesch gets pinned by SFC Johnson and SSG Friend.



Newly pinned Specialists Horn, Mullins, Boesch and Odam.



1SG Allen and SGT Stevens pins SPC Adame while SPC Trahan waits his turn!



CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Hanging in There!

Wow! It's been nearly two months since we touched down in country. Time has gone by so quickly. First, we hit the ground not knowing which way was north or south. Secondly, training was nearly around the clock and people were getting the Kuwaiti Crud (the in-theater common cold). Before you knew it, we were on our way up north to our final destination, Taji, Iraq. We went from sleeping in a 50-75 man tent into our own 1-2 man rickety shacks. Tensions were high; people excited as well as scared, and motivated to take care of business. Then there was the right seat/left seat ride, whatever that was. It seemed like we were more in each others way than anything but it was good to know what the previous unit did, what they experienced, and what to expect. Next was getting into the battle rhythm. What a nightmare. I never saw so many zombies. We became the "Night of the Living Dead" support battalion. No one works harder than us! We live up to the name "Packhorse" because we put a lot of weight on our shoulders and move out. Just when it looked as if things were just too much, we settled into what we now call the battle rhythm. Shifts are in place, people are working into their daily routines and getting used to it and EML (Environmental/ Morale Leave)/Freedom Rest is beginning to take place. The only part that is difficult now is getting used to the people we live with. One plays music to loud and the other doesn't listen to it at all. One loves to sleep and the other wishes they could fall sleep. One is respectful and the other isn't. One is emotional and the other doesn't care. Needless to say, some people are in the shock and awe relationship with their roommate. However, there are many that get along just fine. What a great place to get to know someone.

Perseverance is a wonderful thing. For it's not in one race that we run that gives us endurance but many races put together. Everyday our Soldiers get up and do what they have to do to make it to the next day, the next week, the next month until they get home. Everyday is a new race we must run. Notice I didn't say it's a choice to run the race. Everyday we're here is a day closer to home. I believe Soldiers here run into a wide variety of feelings about life living in a war zone. No matter what though, Soldiers look out for one another when the going gets tough. Is it always easy? No, however that's what makes perseverance special. It's hanging in there when you don't always feel like it and when you are motivated to hang in there the days go by much faster. Perseverance – hanging in their till' the job is done!



FEBRUARY EVENTS

BIRTHDAYS!

The following Packhorse Soldiers will celebrate Birthdays during the month of February:

PFC NERY
1SG DICKENS
SGT STEVENS
SPC NEWLIN
PFC BOWMAN
PFC ISMAIL
SGT HESTER
PFC ELLERBE
CPT KENNEY
SPC GARCIALOPEZ
PFC PADRO
SSG NUNEZ
SPC WARREN

SGT TAYLOR, J.
CPT WALKER
PFC NEZ
PFC CASTELLANOS
PFC HARB
SPC STEWART
PFC HERNANDEZ
CPL FINISTER
1LT KINDER



PROMOTIONS!

SFC ROBINSON
SSG RUIZ, A.
SSG VILLASANA
SGT SIMS
SPC CASTELLANOS
SPC DAVIS, O.
SPC PASSEWE
SPC ADAME
SPC TRAHAN
SPC CANAS

SPC WALLACE
SPC PHILLIPS
SPC ANGENY
SPC OLMOS
SPC MULLINS
SPC BOESCH
SPC ODAM
SPC JOHNSON, P.
PFC MCINTYRE
PFC BAIN

PFC PARKS
PFC FORMENTO
PFC PERKINS
PFC LEE, J.
PFC MURRELL
PFC NEZ



Cyber Patrol: Careless keyboards can kill

By Ed Beemer

January 24, 2006

ARLINGTON, Va. (Army News Service, Jan. 24, 2006) -- Fewer people would know about a deployment or operation if you screamed it out at the Superbowl than if you posted it on a Web log or blog.

Common sense will tell you not to discuss sensitive subjects on the streets of Baghdad. The same common sense should apply on the highways of cyberspace. Soldiers need to keep this in mind, not only because it is the right thing to do, but because it could land them in a world of trouble.

The technology of communication is a double-edged sword and often the sharper edge is being used against you. There have been too many instances of sensitive information being made public. For example one officer posted a picture of his tactical operations center or TOC, complete with secret documents showing troop rotations. Another Soldier in theater posted when his unit's laundry runs were. That information has IED opportunity written all over it.

The list of what should not be posted on an unsecured site or sent via unsecured communication channels is almost endless. It includes the obvious like troop movements, operational details, TDYs, planning issues and any classified material. But it also includes any personal information – information that could be used to put you, your fellow soldiers or even your own family at risk.

This is also a matter of situational awareness; knowing what seemingly innocent information could be useful to the enemy. Each unit's operational security professional needs to advise supervisors on means to prevent the release of sensitive information.

But every Soldier, regardless of rank and position, has a personal responsibility to safeguard what makes it onto the Internet. In order to ensure that sensitive and unauthorized information is not posted, check with your immediate supervisor for approval before your next blog entry or site update. More information on OPSEC can be found at <https://opsec.1sttciomd.army.mil/portal/Public/Pages/Sections.cfm?Section=Opsec>. This is a very serious matter and the fallout from even one instance of releasing unauthorized information can be severe. Senior Army commanders have clearly stated that the Army must "hold people accountable that place others at risk."

Relevant punitive measures are spelled out in AR 25-2 and are worth a thorough reading.

Soldiers have been fined and demoted because of information put on a blog that could have helped the enemy. But the consequences of allowing mission and personal information to get out is more dangerous than simply running the risk of a fine; it could get your fellow Soldiers killed and even put your family members in harm's way.

Psychologically, keeping information tightly guarded is a challenge, especially for soldiers in a wartime environment a long way from friends and family. There is a great urge to connect and let people know what is going on. Often it seems that just a little bit of information can't hurt. Everyone needs to remember that there are many ears and eyes focusing on these little pieces of information.

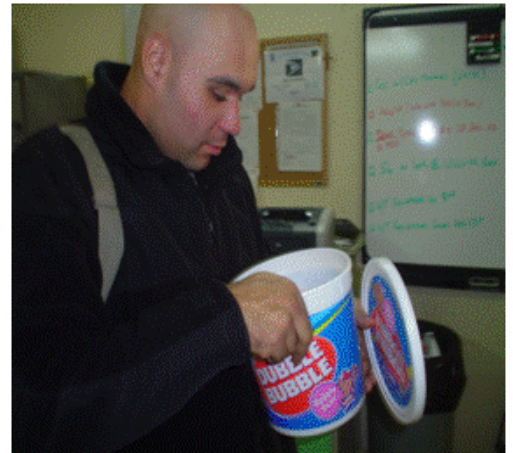
A terrorist manual found in Afghanistan stated, 80 percent of information gathered on the enemy (you) is gathered openly! The technical abilities, resourcefulness, patience and determination of enemy operatives cannot be underestimated –watch what you blog!

(Editor's note: Information provided by the G6 Information Assurance Office.)

PICTURES!



HHC's SSG Sessom and CPT Randall utilize the "meditative visualization" technique to find ways to make the SPO Section more productive.



ACO's PV2 Padro diligently looks for that one special piece of "Double Bubble"!



"Biker Boy"?....nawwwwww, just BCO's 1SG Irving finding life a little easier with his high-speed FOB Runner.



SPC Keene of CCO controls traffic during a recent camp training exercise.